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## THE CHANGES IN THE REGENTS' SYLLABUS FOR 1900<sup>1</sup>

THAT so many have remained to hear a report set down for the afternoon of the last day indicates the interest felt in a work which touches nearly every school in the state. Only the merest outline of what has been accomplished can be given here. Preliminary reports containing suggested changes were made at Convocation one year ago, and at the Principals' Conference last December. These reports have been printed and can be obtained from Director Parsons.

Group 1 has been cut down by omitting English prose, English poetry, German classics in English, French classics in English, Latin classics in English, Greek classics in English, Latin third year, Greek second year, Greek third year, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In the third group French history and the second reading course in United States history have been omitted. In New York state history a reading course will be added to the present syllabus. This is a compromise, as it was the recommendation of the committee that New York history be either discontinued, reduced to one count, or made a reading course in connection with advanced United States history. The following has also been recommended and agreed upon: English reading is to be given a full year with four academic counts, and to be known as fourth year English. Two counts each are to be given to Greek and Roman history, plane and spherical trigonometry, are combined, making one examination with two counts. Latin composition and Greek composition should each receive two counts. To the special topics in history biography has been added and the syllabus in American history somewhat simplified.

It has been thought best to submit to this body, and to the Principals' Conference in December, the question of whether first, second, and third year English shall be fixed courses for five years, or whether they shall be gradually changing as the course in English reading has always changed. It is thought that a boy who fails in *Ivanhoe* can better spend his time in studying some other work of Scott than to go over *Ivanhoe* a second time.

The custom which now prevails of encouraging a student who has failed in the first year to go into second year Latin and second year

<sup>1</sup> Report of Principal F. D. Boynton, chairman, at the June Convocation, Albany.

Greek, and to receive credit for both when he passes the second year, should be extended to French, German, English, solid geometry, and advanced algebra. There are to be no ten weeks' courses. All short courses have been abolished.

The question of adjusting the program for the two schools of science teachers, those who want to continue or think they must continue the text-book method, and those who wish to do laboratory work, will probably be met by combining physics, parts one and two in one year, chemistry, parts one and two in one year, with laboratory work in each, lists of experiments to be given in the syllabus, a certain number to be successfully performed and the notebooks to constitute part of the final review.

The committee on courses of study have received a great many very valuable suggestions. They have met and discussed and argued, they have tried to keep good-natured, but they have no course of study, and they are of the opinion that a fixed course of study for the Empire state cannot be arranged and is not desirable. They are positively certain that the Empire state now has no course of study, unless the regents' syllabus may be called such. Certain localities have, others think they have, a course of study, but in most communities we find that the program changes as frequently as principals change, or, more often, as the local committee changes.

In the last high-school report may be found the following: of the 112 schools reporting to the committee 64 schools report a classical course, 69 schools a Latin scientific course, and 80 an English course. In the 64 schools having a classical course, 68 different subjects are taught, a substantial argument that the "traditional" or "historic" B.A. course has disappeared from preparatory schools. In the 69 schools having a Latin scientific course, 70 different subjects are taught. In the 80 schools having an English course, 69 different subjects are taught.

The 1895 syllabus prescribed 28 counts for every course: 8 counts in English, theoretically 6 points in mathematics but practically 8, 6 in science and 6 in history. If the student elected the classical course (Latin and Greek) he added 15 points in Latin and 11 points in Greek, making a total of 54 points, or four and one half years for graduation—a condition equally true when he elected French or German in place of Greek. This discrimination against the study of foreign language should be discontinued. The committee unanimously agreed that (1) the twelve years below the college should not be

lengthened by the addition of a minute, which means, that four years under the present division of grades are sufficient for a secondary school course; (2) that three subjects a day, five hours a week, of prepared recitation, not to include music, declamation, public speaking, elocution, or rhetorical, are all the average student could do. Three subjects a day, five hours per week, forty weeks in a year, four years, makes 2400 hours in the secondary course. Four years of Latin take one third of the time, 800 hours; mathematics, 400 hours; Greek, French, or German, 600; physiology, 100; United States history, 100; Greek and Roman history, 200; science, 200, with not an hour left for English. This is not satisfactory. The solution lies (1) in more work per day, (2) or in adding another year to the course, or in combining the work of the seventh, eighth, and ninth years, which can be done easily, with the saving of a full year for other work.

For the first year certificate a foreign language may be substituted for the four English points heretofore required. The committee recommends that the same scheme be continued for all certificates and the director in his high-school report accepts the suggestion (see p. 388).

One other change with reference to the daily program of examinations. There has been a very wide objection made to the advanced subjects coming in the last two days,—solid geometry, physics, fourth year English, etc. The suggestion of the committee was that the examination in the preliminaries and the elementary high-school subjects might come Thursday and Friday, thus affording the graduates much needed relief by bringing the advanced subjects earlier in the week. This will be done.

Each principal will receive a copy of the syllabus from the office before it is finally printed, with a request that any changes which he thinks ought to be made be sent either to the committee or to the regents' office, in order that they may be incorporated, if found feasible, in the final revision. This proof of the syllabus, it is hoped, will be ready some time during the month of October. The 1900 syllabus goes into effect on the first day of August, 1900, giving a full school year in which to discuss the changes that have been suggested and others that may appear as the work progresses.

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